

For Your Information

November 9, 2012

The following article written by Charlie Butts appeared on OneNewsNow.com on November 9, 2012.

A United Nations official has delivered a firm statement on international religious freedom with which USCIRF agrees.

Elizabeth Cassidy of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) was present when Heiner Bielefeldt, the U.N. special rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, delivered the report to the General Assembly.

"It was a very strong report, and he took on an issue that is somewhat controversial in some parts of the world, an important issue, and I think he got it right," she responds.

And the USCIRF spokesperson adds that it is a message her group welcomes -- "that international law does protect the rights that he discussed in his report, that a necessary part of freedom of religion is both the right to convert, the right not to be forced to convert or to reconvert, and basically the right to proselytize -- what he called the right to try to convert others by means of non-coercive persuasion."

While the reports are not binding in any way, Cassidy says they do shine a light on the issue and help apply pressure to countries that do not respect religious freedom. She adds that the USCIRF will be able to use the report in conversations with some of those countries where persecution against religious minorities or those who convert to other religions is prevalent.

To interview a USCIRF Commissioner please contact Samantha Schnitzer at sschnitzer@uscirf.gov or (202) 786-0613.